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ABSTRACT

As part of a process of discerning the future direction and mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph College Consortium (SSJCC), a year-long study of 11 institutions founded and run by the Sisters of Saint Joseph was undertaken. Sisters of Saint Joseph (SSJ) is a Roman Catholic women's religious congregation founded in 1836 which operates a consortium of 12 member colleges. Study components included surveys completed by 480 people at 11 colleges and campus visits. In general results showed a strong relationship between the mission and traditions of the order and the current missions of the colleges. Survey results as well as qualitative information gained from observations, experiences, interviews, and group discussion provided data needed for reflective work on the mission of the colleges and their future relationship with the founding congregation. These reflections suggested that the colleges have a unique and important role in current higher education and into the 21st century. Following the study, various efforts were made to educate members of the college communities about the history and mission of the college and the founding congregation. A copy of the survey is appended. (JB)

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The Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium: Mission and Image

Kathryn Miller, SSJ

HE 028 819

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INTRODUCTION

The year 1995 marks ninety years of higher education in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The order was founded by a Jesuit, Jean Pierre Medaille, in France almost 350 years ago. Its mission is contained in a succinct and clear statement in the core constitution:

> Our mission as Sisters of St. Joseph flows from the purpose for which the Congregation exists: we live and work so that all people may be united with God and with one another. . . . To bring about this unity, we search out and undertake whatever works may best show forth the glory of God . . . , and we work to alleviate the conditions which cause poverty, suffering, and oppression.

The first sisters were sent out to meet needs in the city—a countercultural mission at a time when the vast majority of women religious were cloistered. Since education was provided only for the wealthy and rarely for girls, the sisters began to teach the Catholic faith, reading and writing, and the crafts of lace-making and embroidery to young girls.

In 1836, several of the sisters came to America and established a foundation in Carondelet, Missouri. As additional groups were founded, the educational works of the community were extended throughout the United States. The first college, the College of St. Catherine, was founded in 1905. Since then the sisters have founded at least 28 colleges. Of these, 19 are still in existence, including four that have merged with other colleges. While all Sisters of St. Joseph share a common heritage and tradition, some foundations do not use the letters SSJ in identifying themselves. This report does not differentiate among foundations, but uses SSJ as descriptive terminology for all.

A second significant milestone in 1995 is the tenth anniversary of the Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium (SSJCC). The original and ongoing purpose of the consortium is to facilitate communication and cooperation among member institutions based on their shared heritage and their future vision as defined by the membership.

To recognize and commemorate these two anniversaries, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities presents this report on a unique project undertaken in 1993-94 by Kathryn Miller, SSJ. The 1993 ACCU annual meeting, "Spreading the Word," encouraged colleges and universities to bond with one another in creative ways, especially where there is a common mission and heritage. Although the preliminary design of the project had previously been discussed, the ACCU presentations encouraged consortium presidents to invest in this endeavor.

It is hoped that the design and results of this study will encourage others to engage in similar research.

Paul J. Gallagher
Acting Executive Director

NINETY YEARS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE TRADITION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

Kathyrn Miller, SSJ

THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH COLLEGE CONSORTIUM

In July 1985, representatives from nine of the colleges founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph met at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia to explore possible areas of cooperation. After discussing the nature, characteristics, and significant programs of their respective colleges, those present agreed that their institutions seemed to have many similarities. This led to extensive discussion about the impact of the Sisters of St. Joseph on these colleges.

Several questions were raised: What difference does it make that a college is sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph? What relationship does this have to the charism and tradition of the sisters? How are our colleges perceived? What attracts students and faculty?

The outcome of the 1985 meeting was the formation of the Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium. All of the colleges founded and/or sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph were invited to membership. At present 12 colleges belong to the SSJCC:

Aquinas College, Milton, MA
Aquinas College, Newton, MA
Avila College, Kansas City, MO
Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, PA
Elms College, Chicopee, MA
Fontbonne College, St. Louis, MO
Mater Dei College, Ogdensburg, NY
Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, CA
Nazareth College of Rochester, NY
Regis College, Weston, MA
College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, MN
College of St. Rose, Albany, NY

Today these 12 colleges claim more than 112,000 alumnae/i and approximately 20,000 students. Approximately 225 Sisters of St. Joseph are currently in ministry at the consortium colleges. However, several colleges have fewer than ten sisters, while one has almost 50. More than 70% of the total are full-time administrators, faculty, or staff; 40% are full-time faculty. About 45% of the sisters live on campus; however, very few live in student residences. Sisters also are represented on boards of directors, and some are in ministry in other sectarian and nonsectarian colleges and universities.

While there seems to be a strong commitment by SSJ congregations to the ministry of higher education, the following facts must be considered:

Approximately 225 Sisters of St. Joseph are currently in ministry at the consortium colleges.

only four colleges have a Sister of St. Joseph as president; the average age of the sisters at the colleges is at least 55; and there are fewer sisters, if any, to replace those retiring or moving into other ministries.

Although all of the colleges belonging to the consortium were founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph, it should be noted that the relationship of the colleges to their founding and/or sponsoring congregations varies.

Consortium presidents, or their representatives, meet annually in conjunction with the ACCU meeting. Agendas have included discussion of mission and sponsorship, information sharing, the establishment of a student exchange program among consortium institutions, and development of guidelines for faculty exchange and consultation services.

How does the mission of the sisters relate to the unique mission of each of our colleges?

MISSION AND IMAGE: A PROJECT OF THE SSJCC

Questions very similar to those surfaced in 1985 when the consortium was formed have re-emerged in this last decade of the century: Who are we? When we call ourselves colleges in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph, what does that mean? How does the mission of the sisters relate to the unique mission of each of our colleges? What makes us different from other Catholic colleges and universities? What are our distinctive characteristics?

In order to address these questions, eight of the SSJCC colleges—Avila, Chestnut Hill, Elms, Fontbonne, Mount St. Mary's, Regis, St. Catherine, and St. Rose—funded a year-long project, "SSJCC: Mission and Image," and participated fully in the study. Representatives from three of the other colleges completed surveys; one college was unable to participate.

The project had the following goals:

1. To examine the mission of the SSJCC colleges and the relationship of these colleges to their founding and/or sponsoring congregation.
2. To share processes for educating all constituents of the colleges around the issues of SSJ mission and sponsorship.
3. To promote the activities of the SSJCC.
4. To prepare for the year 2000.

At the outset, the executive director of the United States Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph confirmed that such a study had not previously been undertaken, gave the study full support, and announced its goals in the federation's newsletter.

METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain quantitative and qualitative data, written surveys and interviews were conducted on participating campuses. In addition, materials and processes were reviewed that had been used by Jesuit, Benedictine, Mercy, and Franciscan congregations in similar studies of mission as it relates to higher education. These materials demonstrated the uniqueness of each study, as well as a growing interest in such research.

Surveys. When the consortium was formed in 1985, a survey of selected

colleges founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph was conducted. That survey was adapted for use in this study (Attachment 1). The items included touch on various aspects of the SSJ mission.

A total of 480 people from 11 colleges completed the survey, 400 of them in the context of an interview or discussion group. Participants included board members, administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and SSJ leadership teams. Although the number of respondents varied on each campus, they represented all constituencies of the college community. The majority, 80.2%, were female. However, only 24% of the total number were Sisters of St. Joseph. Participants varied in age from 18 to 61+. (See Attachment 2.)

A total of 480 people from 11 colleges completed the survey.

Four additional surveys were developed in order to obtain complete background information for the project. (Copies of these surveys are available upon request.) First, the archivists, or someone in a similar position, at all 28 SSJ congregations throughout the country were surveyed in order to gather historical information on higher education as provided by the Sisters of St. Joseph in North America.

Second, an admissions/public relations survey was sent to appropriate personnel in each SSJCC college requesting ideas for a corporate image and/or national marketing plan for SSJCC members. Additional items questioned respondents' familiarity with and perceptions of the SSJCC student exchange program.

The other two surveys related only to the SSJCC student exchange program. One was sent to registrars requesting information on student participation in the exchange program since its inception. The other was sent to students who had participated in the exchange program. Questions related to availability of information regarding the program, the value of the experience, and students' perceptions of education at more than one SSJCC college.

Campus Visits. Two- or three-day campus visits were scheduled at each of the eight participating colleges. Presidents identified a campus contact person to work with the project director prior to and during the campus visit. On-going communication with presidents provided important support and encouragement for the project.

Information sent in advance to the designated contact persons provided directives for all participating colleges but allowed flexibility to meet the needs and desires of individual institutions (Attachment 3). Prior to visiting the campus, the project director studied the mission statement and related documents for each college.

Several days were spent on participating campuses during a six-month time period. The survey was administered, and interviews were conducted, individually or in small groups. Interviews and group meetings began with introductions, a review of project goals, and completion of surveys. Participants received a copy of the mission and/or vision statement of the founding/sponsoring congregation and a copy of the mission statement of the college. Discussions centered on three basic themes. These included the relationship between the SSJ mission and the

mission of the college; processes in place for educating members of the college community about the mission and traditions of the Sisters of St. Joseph and of the college; and responses to the question: What can SSJCC colleges do together that we can't do alone?

In addition to conducting these discussions, the project director toured the campus, attended college events, and interacted informally with numerous members of the college community. Visits to SSJ mother houses and retirement homes and overnight hospitality provided by SSJs, on and off campus, yielded additional information.

Materials gathered during campus visits included undergraduate and graduate catalogs, viewbooks, long-range and strategic plans, mission integration materials, and alumnae/i magazines.

What can SSJCC colleges do together that we can't do alone?

Soon after the campus visit, the president of the college received a preliminary report pertaining to that particular college, including: general observations; survey results; summary of meaningful words/phrases referenced from the SSJ mission and/or vision statement and related words/phrases in the college mission statement; summary of processes used to educate the college community about its history, traditions, and current mission; and ideas and suggestions for the future of the SSJCC.

A final report to all the presidents included: information relating to the entire SSJCC; both total and comparative survey results; distinctive characteristics of SSJCC colleges; recommendations; and several appendices. A second copy of the complete report was provided for the congregational leadership team.

SURVEY RESULTS

Attachment 4 shows survey results for all participants. They are presented in two ways for each item: percent of agreement (strongly agree and agree combined); and the scale response from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). On both measures the range of responses as well as the average response are given. Each college also received comparative information for the participants from that particular college.

In general, results show a strong relationship between the mission and traditions of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the current missions of the SSJCC colleges. In fact, 88.5% of the 480 people surveyed agreed with the survey item: "I think the current mission, specific objectives, and purpose of this college are consistent with the philosophy and tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph." The scale score on this item is 4.31, indicating strong agreement.

Results also indicate the influence of SSJ traditions on the following characteristics of the SSJCC colleges: caring community (93.5% agreement); hospitable environment (89.5% agreement); strength of academic programs (84.3% agreement); and concern for religious values (80.3% agreement). Scale scores on these items show rather strong agreement. Additional items are discussed in the next section.

Results of the survey together with qualitative information gained from observations, experiences, interviews, and group discussions provided

data needed for the discussion that follows. Although further analysis of survey results may be done, it was not required to meet project goals at this time.

RESPONSE TO GOALS OF THE PROJECT

Goal 1: To examine the mission of the SSJCC colleges and the relationship of these colleges to their founding and/or sponsoring congregation. As a result of this study, five distinctive characteristics, rooted in the mission and traditions of the Sisters of St. Joseph, were identified. Each SSJCC college exhibits these characteristics to some degree. Thus, the colleges enjoy a special relationship with one another and with their founding and/or sponsoring congregations.

These distinctive characteristics are not totally unique to the SSJCC colleges, and they are not separate from one another. In fact, it is in their integration that the true mission and spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph are found. Characteristics include:

The women who founded the colleges were courageous, assertive, and future-oriented.

1. Hospitality and caring community. This is, perhaps, the most universal and obvious characteristic of the Sisters of St. Joseph colleges. It is experienced by all who visit the campuses, as well as by those who study and/or work there. Survey results show the strongest level of agreement on the cluster of items related to this characteristic. There is an average score of 4.34 (on a scale from 5, strongly agree, to 1, strongly disagree) and 88.4% agreement on this cluster of items.

2. Concern for all without distinction. SSJCC colleges "promote the dignity and worth of every human person." (See survey items 6 and 9.) This is evident in the way people treat one another, regardless of whether the person is the president or the painter, the oldest or the youngest, a religious or a lay person. People are addressed with respect and called by name whenever possible.

It is interesting to note that this type of concern can sometimes make it more difficult for members of the college community to deal with conflict and work toward reconciliation. This is evident in responses to the survey item, "Members of this college community make efforts to reconcile differences that arise between individuals and groups." The percent of agreement (66.8%) and average score (3.80) are considerably lower on this item than results for most other items on the survey. Since reconciling differences is a need at all levels of society, members of these college communities expressed a desire to develop methods of conflict resolution and work toward peaceful resolutions within and beyond the campuses.

3. Addressing the needs of the times. The Sisters of St. Joseph colleges were founded by women for the education of women at a time when women did not enjoy the same educational opportunities as men did. The women who founded the colleges, all Sisters of St. Joseph, were courageous, assertive and future-oriented. Today these colleges continue to provide a quality education for traditional college students

and for many who otherwise would not have the opportunity to study at the postsecondary level, including members of various minority groups, single mothers, international students, and those with disabilities. Several of the colleges are now co-educational, and most have extended their programs to meet the needs of non-traditional adult learners and graduate students.

Survey results show 73.7% of the respondents agree that "adapting to the needs of the times" is an attitude evident in these colleges. Comments indicate that meeting the needs of the times is a priority, but that implementation is sometimes slow.

4. Striving for excellence in all endeavors. Everything is done well on these campuses. This extends beyond academics to support services, student life, use of resources, relationships between students and faculty, and much more.

Concern for religious values is evident in the educational experience on these campuses.

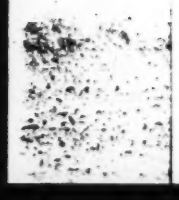
Almost 80% of the survey respondents agree that intellectual excellence stemming from the Jesuit heritage is a priority in SSJCC colleges, and 84.3% recognize the influence of the Sisters of St. Joseph on the strength of the academic programs offered. Although faculty members often question the academic quality of today's educational experience, serious efforts are made to help all students reach their potential. SSJCC colleges strive to provide the best educational experience possible to the diverse student population of today.

5. Making a difference in the local and world community. This characteristic is evident in the outreach efforts made by current students and in the lives of alumnae/i from SSJCC colleges. Concern for religious values—although not necessarily a characteristic that draws students to these colleges—is evident in the educational experience on these campuses. (See survey items 4d and 8c.)

Students and alumnae/i who were interviewed reported that their education made a difference in their own lives, and they expressed a desire to improve local and world conditions. Some expression of this characteristic is found in the mission statement of each college.

The integration of these distinctive characteristics has brought about unique and tangible approaches to campus issues. Thus, for example, the effort these colleges are making to encourage and support diversity, a major challenge facing all of higher education as the 21st century approaches, is not new but something that flows from the very roots and foundations of the order.

Goal 2: To share processes for educating all constituents of the colleges around the issues of SSJ mission and sponsorship. Various efforts are made on SSJCC campuses to educate members of the college community about the history and mission of the college and to relate them to the mission of the founding and/or sponsoring congregation. These include annual workshops, colloquia, symposia, and campus ministry programs; celebrations of Founder's Day and Women's History Month; orientation



programs and seminars for students, administrators, faculty, staff, board members, and alumnae/i.

Accreditation self-studies and presidential search processes also frequently focus on history and mission. Although the president is the chief promoter of mission, many colleges have designated specific persons, committees, or task forces who are responsible for mission effectiveness activities. (A complete list of these activities is available upon request.)

Since all of the SSJCC colleges enjoy the presence of some Sisters of St. Joseph, opportunities are still available to share information and to prepare colleagues to continue the rich heritage of the congregation long after the sisters are gone from the colleges. But time is running out. Such efforts now and in the future will depend on collaboration with lay men and women in board, administrative, faculty, and staff positions. The level of commitment of lay members to the history and mission of these colleges is inspiring and hopeful. In fact, several lay presidents, as well as a religious from a different congregation, have assumed leadership positions in promoting the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph on their own campuses, as well as throughout the consortium.

The commitment of lay members is inspiring and hopeful.

At the inauguration of Dennis Golden as president of Fontbonne College, in her welcoming remarks, Sister Donna Gunn, CSJ, made the following comments:

> This inauguration is rooted in documents from the Second Vatican Council. The document on religious life encouraged religious to re-discover the spirit of their founders so they might better understand the specific gifts they were to give the church. In doing that, we Sisters of St. Joseph realized that the laity are as much a part of our heritage as the vowed members. From our founding in 1650, to our refounding after the French Revolution, women gathered together to share faith and service—however—not all of them entered the congregation. Even our coming to America in 1836 was a collaborative effort of Mother Fontbonne and a lay woman who encouraged and financially supported our ministry in this country. Partnering with the laity is integral to how we Sisters of St. Joseph choose to function in the church.

She went on to say that it was imperative to understand that Dr. Golden was not selected as president because there was no Sister of St. Joseph to assume the role, but because as a lay partner, he is "as much a part of our founder's design and our history as any vowed member."

Goal 3: To promote the activities of the SSJCC. One of the incentives for the establishment of the SSJCC in 1985, and the first initiative of the consortium, was a student exchange program. The student exchange is a way for students to expand their horizons, to help them realize they are part of a national campus, and to make the consortium better known nationally. Programs for faculty exchange and for consultation services also are in place. Although there has been little formal activity in the latter areas to date, several SSJs have enjoyed sabbatical opportunities on other SSJCC campuses. Two newly elected SSJ presidents profited from their

experiences on other campuses prior to taking office. There seems to be a growing interest in these opportunities.

During the numerous interviews and discussions with participants in this study, many strong comments were made regarding the potential of the SSJCC as a means to enhance and strengthen the image of our colleges. Several hundred creative ideas and suggestions surfaced in response to the question: What can we do together that we can't do alone? Various suggestions were integrated in order to give some focus and direction for the future. For convenience, they are organized under special categories, i.e., General Administration, Sponsorship, Institutional Advancement, Mission Effectiveness/Integration, Recruitment, Faculty, Student Exchange Program, Student Life, Board of Directors, Graduate Programs, and Alumnae/i. (A complete list of ideas and suggestions is available upon request.)

SSJCC can be a means to enhance and strengthen the image of our colleges.

Some of the suggestions can easily be implemented by individual colleges, while others have been synthesized and presented to the SSJCC presidents as formal recommendations.

Goal 4: To prepare for the year 2000. There is strong evidence that the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph will continue to impact SSJ colleges when there are no more SSJs in active ministry on these campuses—which could be a reality by the turn of the century, at least for some of the colleges. The SSJCC provides the vehicle through which joint efforts can be made to preserve the mission and to provide an educational experience believed to be important.

The project director formulated 12 primary recommendations related to the goals of the project. Currently under consideration by SSJCC presidents, they are:

1. That each college enhance its relationship with its sponsoring congregation/province through immediate implementation of the following:
   sharing results of this study with leadership and membership in whatever way is appropriate;
   working continuously toward integration of the SSJ mission into the mission and experience of the college today; and
   encouraging SSJs to clarify their special role in the ministry of higher education in our colleges and to encourage other sisters to consider this ministry.
2. That the SSJCC use the Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph as a vehicle for communication by submitting articles to the federation newsletter and by conducting special interest sessions on higher education at national federation meetings.
3. That each college have an appointed person or group responsible for developing and implementing processes for mission awareness and mission integration for all constituents of the college.
4. That SSJCC colleges share ideas and processes with one another through a "mobile mission effectiveness person," or someone who is responsible for coordinating the activities of the SSJCC.

5. That the agenda for the annual meeting of SSJCC presidents include some discussion on mission and sponsorship.
6. That the SSJCC establish an organizational structure that would have three tiers:

   National Board of SSJCC Presidents

   The board would be responsible for establishing a central office, hiring an executive director, and approving policies; it would meet annually.

   Executive Director

   This would be a part-time position. The executive director's responsibilities might include: emphasizing mission effectiveness/integration; providing a clearinghouse for information; acting as a resource across institutions; initiating collaborative projects/opportunities; seeking funds/grants; coordinating activities; and implementing project recommendations.

   Campus Contacts

   A person on each campus to take leadership for the SSJCC would be appointed—for more than just the student exchange. This person would work with the executive director.
7. That each college provide some money in the annual budget to support the activities of the SSJCC, e.g., federation events, faculty seminars, administrative/staff enrichment opportunities, and student leadership conferences.
8. That college administrators on every campus find ways to promote the student exchange program.
9. That the process used for participation in the student exchange program be clarified and simplified.
10. That the results of this project be circulated throughout each college campus, and that the recommendations and other suggestions be implemented wherever possible and appropriate.
11. That presidents encourage administrators, faculty, and staff to gather at regional and national conferences in order to get to know one another and to share information and resources.
12. That some individual or group be commissioned to prepare several joint publications for the consortium, including a colorful viewbook-type piece (and/or a video) emphasizing the distinctive characteristics of higher education in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph, as well as a brief description on each SSJCC college; an attractive, informative, and inexpensive promotional brochure for the student exchange program; and a poster-type piece for on-campus use and for mailing purposes.

As a result of the project, 12 primary recommendations have been formulated.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study provided an opportunity for reflection and discussion on the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph by several hundred members of the consortium colleges and their founding and/or sponsoring congregations. Although some participants were more familiar with the SSJ

mission than others, all expressed sincere interest and appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the relationship of the SSJ mission to the particular mission of each college. This opportunity supported the numerous efforts evident on SSJCC campuses to educate members of the college community about their history and traditions.

The original purpose and mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and of the colleges they founded and continue to sponsor today, is toward unity of all people with God and with one another. The study showed that there is a strong relationship between the SSJ mission and the current mission of the SSJCC colleges. These colleges seem to have a unique and important role in higher education at this time and into the 21st century. In fact, higher education in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph may be even more necessary now than in the past.

Higher education in the tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph may be even more necessary now than in the past.

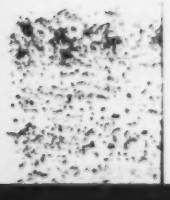
The identification of five distinctive characteristics, i.e., hospitality and caring community, concern for all without distinction, addressing the needs of the times, striving for excellence in all endeavors, making a difference in the local and world community, can serve as a catalyst for future discussions by all constituents of these colleges. These discussions should be held on each campus, and opportunities should be provided for dialogue among colleagues throughout the SSJCC and with other ACCU members.

The presidents of the SSJCC colleges met in Washington in February 1995, in conjunction with the annual ACCU meeting. Discussion on the initial impact of the study indicated that a unified mission is evident at the Sisters of St. Joseph colleges. Reflection and discussion on the mission of the college in relationship to that of the congregation, results of the survey, and observations during campus visits attest to this.

It also was noted that participation in the project was in itself an effective means of enhancing mission awareness on the campuses and of increasing interest in the consortium. Results of the study had been shared with many congregational leadership teams and with various members of the college communities. In addition to the overall report, individual college reports, including observations from campus visits and comparative survey results, provided specific information for each college.

Several examples shared at the meeting show some of the ways in which the colleges had already begun to use the study. One college was using the results in relation to a specific goal of its strategic plan, which addressed identity as a Catholic, SSJ-sponsored institution. One found the study helpful in the search process for a new president, and another incorporated the distinctive characteristics of SSJCC colleges into a seminar during the inaugural celebration of its new president. Several colleges claimed that the outcomes of the project helped to inform discussions around mission and values. Others had begun to use it in strategic planning and reaccreditation processes.

Two national gatherings, held in the summer of 1995, provided opportunities for further conversations about this project and other topics of



interest for the future. First, when the United States Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph met in Philadelphia on July 21, SSJs in higher education participated in a special ministry/interest session. These sisters represented colleges founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph, as well as other Catholic and non-Catholic colleges and universities.

The initial discussion focused on topics of mission integration and its impact in higher education and the competencies, skills, and new insights needed for the future. It was followed by discussion of the five distinctive characteristics that resulted from this study. Those present seemed to identify with the characteristics and were enthusiastic about opportunities to support one another in this ministry. Soon after the meeting, addresses were circulated so that participants could network regardless of where they are in ministry at this time.

The potential of the consortium achieved greater recognition through this study.

The second gathering was held in August in conjunction with "Catholic Higher Education: Practice and Promise," the ACCU conference at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. A breakfast meeting provided an opportunity for teams representing SSJCC colleges to meet one another and to dialogue about the future of the consortium. Discussion resulted in the formation of a task force to plan a program for representatives of SSJCC colleges next year.

At present, the task force is working on plans for a weekend seminar to be held at Fontbonne College in St. Louis, August 2-4, 1996. Although the program is in the planning process, it probably will include a presentation by a soon-to-be-identified keynote speaker, formal and informal discussions, reflection time, and a visit to Carondelet—the original foundation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States.

The task force is considering one of the five distinctive characteristics identified through this project as the basic theme of the seminar. Once that decision is made, this ACCU publication, as well as the specific reports sent to the participating colleges, can be recommended as background reading in preparation for the seminar. The task force hopes to conclude the seminar with some plans that the SSJCC colleges can implement during the 1996-97 academic year, including a network for ongoing communication among the members.

The potential of the Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium has achieved greater recognition through this study. The presidents of the colleges, meeting annually in conjunction with ACCU conferences, have accomplished the original goals of the SSJCC, i.e., communication and cooperation among its member institutions, based on their shared heritage, and the establishment of several joint programs. This seems to be the time to employ an executive director (Recommendation #6) for the SSJCC and to implement the other recommendations of the study. These items are under consideration by the presidents and will be addressed at their 1996 meeting.

An article in the *National Catholic Reporter* (Dawn Gibeau, 10/7/94) raised a concern that "the distinctive characteristics of individual religious orders that stamp many Catholic colleges and universities could

fade as the membership of those religious orders dwindles. As a result of that concern, deliberate steps are being taken across the country to assure that the orders' educational institutions retain for tomorrow the congregational imprints that set them apart today and yesterday." The project, "SSJCC: Mission and Image," provides a significant step in this process.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathryn Miller, SSJ, a Sister of St. Joseph of Philadelphia, received her BA in mathematics from Chestnut Hill College and her MA and PhD in psychology from Temple University. She was dean of Chestnut Hill College from 1980 to 1993. In addition to her academic responsibilities, she concentrated on mission awareness and mission integration processes with all constituents of the college community. For the past two years, she has worked as a consultant for planning, facilitation, and program development for various church-related organizations. She was the director of the project, "SSJCC: Mission and Image," sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium. She is currently in administration for the Sisters of St. Joseph.

ATTACHMENT #1

SISTERS
OF
ST. JOSEPH
COLLEGE
CONSORTIUM

SURVEY OF CONSTITUENTS OF SELECTED COLLEGES
FOUNDED BY
THE SISTERS OF ST.JOSEPH

In 1985 the newly formed Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium (SSJCC) conducted a survey of selected colleges founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The purpose of the survey was to provide some answers to the following two questions:

> Do the colleges founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph have similar characteristics?
> How much are the characteristics of these colleges influenced by the sponsorship of the Sisters of St. Joseph?

This survey is adapted from the original and is being used in conjunction with a 1993-94 Consortium Project, SSJCC: Mission and Image. Please complete the survey and add any comments you wish to make. Thank you for your participation.

Respondent Information

a. Male _____ Female _____

b. Sister of St. Joseph YES _____ NO _____

c. Check as many as applicable:

College Administrator _____ Faculty _____

SSJ/CSJ Representative _____ Staff _____

Board of Trustees _____ Graduate Student _____

Undergraduate Student _____ Alumna/us _____

Other _____

d. Age Range: 18 - 23 _____ 24 - 30 _____

31 - 40 _____ 41 - 50 _____

51 - 60 _____ 61 - _____

_____
Signature (optional)

October 1993

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Indicate your level of agreement/disagreement using a five-point scale:
5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = agree somewhat,
2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.
If you are unable to answer the item, use NA.

Please use the space at the end to comment on any item and/or to add any other comments you wish to make.

1. This college provides a caring, supportive environment for all associated with it. ____

2. This college enjoys a well-deserved, strong academic reputation. ____

3. I think the current mission, specific objectives and purpose of this college are consistent with the philosophy and tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph. ____

4. The tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph has influenced the following characteristics of the college:

   a. caring community _____

   b. hospitable environment _____

   c. strength of its academic programs _____

   d. concern for religious values _____

5. The Sisters of St. Joseph believe that their ministry involves adapting to the needs of the times. This attitude is evident in this college. ____

6. It is evident that those who work at the college live by a philosophy which promotes the dignity and worth of the human person. ____

7. Members of this college community make efforts to reconcile differences that arise between individuals and groups. ____

8. Current and/or prospective students are drawn to the college primarily because of its:

   a. strong academic reputation _____

   b. caring, supportive atmosphere _____

   c. concern for religious values _____

   d. hospitable environment _____

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e. size _____

f. location _____

g. cost _____

9. Students who attend this college learn to value and promote the dignity and worth of every human person. _____

10. The Sisters of St. Joseph, originally founded in the Jesuit spiritual and intellectual tradition, place high priority on intellectual excellence. It is evident that this college still shares that value. _____

Please comment on any item and/or add other comments you wish to make.

Are you aware of the Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium and its benefits?
YES _____ SOMEWHAT _____ NO _____

If YES, how did you learn about the SSJCC?

ATTACHMENT #2

Directives Sent to Campus Contacts Prior to Visits

I would like to meet with various constituents of the college community as individuals and/or as groups. The purpose of the interviews/group discussions is to get first-hand, qualitative information from as many members of the college community as possible. I will present a brief questionnaire/survey to individuals and groups to be completed and discussed during our time together. Responses of participants should be spontaneous.

Suggested individuals and groups are listed below. However, each college may arrange the schedule in accord with its own special culture and needs. Schedule may include breakfast/lunch/dinner meetings, day or evening, or whatever works best for the college.

Individuals: 30 - 45 minutes each
- President
- Congregational representative(s)
- Campus Minister/Mission Promoter
- Key faculty member(s)
- Some Sisters of St. Joseph
- Board Member(s)
- Alumnae/i
- Student Government Leader(s)

Small groups (approximately 8 per group): 45 - 50 minutes
- Administrators
- Faculty
- Students - diverse group(s)
- Staff - professional, support, etc.
- Mixed group(s) - another option

On-campus Contact Person - Responsibilities:

1. To arrange the schedule for the campus visit.
2. To provide a complete list of names of individuals and group participants.
3. To provide any additional information regarding college processes already in place that are used to enhance the mission of the college.
4. To duplicate materials needed:
   - College Mission Statement
   - SSJ/CSJ Mission Statement
   - Questionnaire/Survey

ATTACHMENT #3

Respondent Information

A total of 480 people from 11 colleges completed the survey. The number of respondents from each college is as follows:

College	Respondents
Aquinas College (Newton)	11
Avila College	40
Chestnut Hill College	60
Elms College	82
Fontbonne College	51
Mater Dei College	22
Mount St. Mary's College	51
Nazareth College of Rochester	24
Regis College	47
The College of St. Catherine	25
The College of St. Rose	67
Total	480

Demographics

a. Male 95 = 19.8% Female 385 = 80.2%

b. Sister of St. Joseph YES 115 = 24.1% NO 363 = 75.9%

c. Check as many as applicable:

College Administrator 116 Faculty 138

SSJ/CSJ Representative 33 Staff 122

Board of Trustees 38 Graduate Student 36

Undergraduate Student 125 Alumna/us 115

N.B. Many respondents checked more than one category.

d. Age Range: 18 - 23 104 = 21.8% 24 - 30 35 = 7.3%

31 - 40 63 = 13.2% 41 - 50 108 = 22.6%

51 - 60 91 = 19.1% 61 - 76 = 15.9%

ATTACHMENT #4

SURVEY OF CONSTITUENTS OF SELECTED COLLEGES
FOUNDED BY
THE SISTERS OF ST.JOSEPH

SURVEY RESULTS for All Participants (N = 480)

Guide to reading and interpreting results:

A. % Agreement, i.e., Strongly Agree + Agree

Example: **This college provides a caring, supportive environment for all associated with it.**

	% agreement
Range	64% - 100%
Average SSJCC	86.6%

Interpretation: Of the eleven colleges that participated, the range of agreement on this item is from 64% to 100%. The average percent of agreement for all 480 participants is 86.6%. Therefore, this item shows that 86.6% of those responding to this item agree that the SSJCC college **provides a caring, supportive environment for all associated with it**.

B. Scale of 5 to 1, i.e., Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree

Example: **This college provides a caring, supportive environment for all associated with it.**

	Scale, 5 to 1
Range	4.70 - 3.88
Average SSJCC	4.31

Interpretation: Of the eleven colleges that participated, the range of responses on the scale from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) is from 4.70 to 3.88. The average response for all 480 participants is 4.31. Therefore, those responding to this item agree rather strongly that the SSJCC college **provides a caring, supportive environment for all associated with it**.

1. **This college provides a caring, supportive environment for all associated with it.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	64% - 100%	Range	4.70 - 3.88
Average SSJCC	86.6%	Average SSJCC	4.31

2. **This college enjoys a well-deserved, strong academic reputation.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	27% - 96%	Range	4.35 - 3.05
Average SSJCC	78.6%	Average SSJCC	4.08

3. **I think the current mission, specific objectives and purpose of this college are consistent with the philosophy and tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	70% - 100%	Range	4.60 - 3.80
Average SSJCC	88.5%	Average SSJCC	4.31

4. **The tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph has influenced the following characteristics of the college:**

4a. caring community

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	82% - 99%	Range	4.80-3.84
Average SSJCC	93.5%	Average SSJCC	4.48

4b. hospitable environment

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	71% - 95%	Range	4.72 - 3.80
Average SSJCC	89.5%	Average SSJCC	4.41

4c. strength of its academic programs

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	70% - 96%	Range	4.48 - 3.25
Average SSJCC	84.3%	Average SSJCC	4.14

4d. concern for religious values

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	52% - 96%	Range	4.49 - 3.52
Average SSJCC	80.3%	Average SSJCC	4.19

5. **The Sisters of St. Joseph believe that their ministry involves adapting to the needs of the times. This attitude is evident in this college.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	59% - 82%	Range	4.29 - 3.72
Average SSJCC	73.7%	Average SSJCC	4.05

6. **It is evident that those who work at the college live by a philosophy which promotes the dignity and worth of the human person.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	65% - 100%	Range	4.50 - 3.67
Average SSJCC	81.2%	Average SSJCC	4.15

7. **Members of this college community make efforts to reconcile differences that arise between individuals and groups.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	36% - 78%	Range	4.06 - 3.40
Average SSJCC	66.8%	Average SSJCC	3.80

8. **Current and/or prospective students are drawn to the college primarily because of its:**

8a. strong academic reputation

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	14% - 88%	Range	4.29 - 2.95
Average SSJCC	73.4%	Average SSJCC	3.96

8b. caring, supportive atmosphere

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	67% - 97%	Range	4.60 - 3.83
Average SSJCC	87.4%	Average SSJCC	4.30

8c. concern for religious values

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	8% - 44%	Range	3.61 - 2.75
Average SSJCC	32.7%	Average SSJCC	3.28

8d. hospitable environment

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	67% - 100%	Range	4.53 - 3.75
Average SSJCC	85.2%	Average SSJCC	4.21

8e. size

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	67% - 100%	Range	4.45 - 3.88
Average SSJCC	87.9%	Average SSJCC	4.25

8f. **location**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	59% - 92%	Range	4.35 - 3.90
Average SSJCC	78.8%	Average SSJCC	4.08

8g. cost

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	8% - 86%	Range	4.32 - 2.47
Average SSJCC	48.3%	Average SSJCC	3.44

9. **Students who attend this college learn to value and promote the dignity and worth of every human person.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	48% - 91%	Range	4.29 - 3.43
Average SSJCC	73.8%	Average SSJCC	3.92

10. **The Sisters of St. Joseph, originally founded in the Jesuit spiritual and intellectual tradition, place high priority on intellectual excellence. It is evident that this college still shares that value.**

% agreement		Scale, 5 to 1	
Range	48% - 98%	Range	4.45 - 3.52
Average SSJCC	79.1%	Average SSJCC	4.08

Are you aware of the Sisters of St. Joseph College Consortium and its benefits?

YES	Range	9% - 64%
	Average SSJCC	40.2%
SOMEWHAT	Range	18% - 51%
	Average SSJCC	36.2%
NO	Range	6% - 55%
	Average SSJCC	23.6%

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